THE POETIC SPIRIT - Philip Lamantia.
San Francisco Art Institute, Summer 1979.

I: What is poetry? (Part One)

1. Poetic theory of the nature of language.
2. Primitive expressions in pre-capitalist formations.
   a. Readings in texts translated from the languages of the Costanoan Indians of the San Francisco Bay Area.
   b. Dream life, myth-making, magical art.
   c. Childhood sources.
3. ... Magic: The Flesh & Blood of Poetry by Benjamin Péret.
4. Present theory: positive negation and subsequent imaginary transformations of given reality.
   a. Dialectics of presentation and representation.
   b. Audial-verbal imagination as primary and its elaboration into visual thought. Comparisons with the primary visual fields of the plastic arts.

II: What is poetry?(Part Two)

1. Recapitulation of Part One with discussion of theoretic & poetic texts previously furnished.
2. From Hegel's Aesthetics to Surrealism.
3. Present perspectives as guide to the reevaluation of the poetic past in English and American sources since Colonial times.
   a. Historical considerations. Ex.: revolutionary movements and their interrelations with the poetic sensibility.
4. Examples of the unintended eruption of the poetic marvelous in Early American writings: Cotton Mather's Wonders of the Invisible World and in Jonathan Edwards. Colonial America's most widely-read poem, Michael Wigglesworth's The Day of Doom.

III: Survey of pre-romanticism: William Collins and Edward Young's Night Thoughts and his essay, Conjectures On Original Composition in England; and William Blake. In America: The House of Night by the Revolutionary poet, Philip Freneau.

2. Romanticism and the Gothic sensibility. In England: Shelley's A Defence of Poetry. The poetic qualities in the Gothic novels of Walpole, Mrs Radcliffe, Monk Lewis and Maturin. In America: Charles Brockden Brown's Weiland and the gothic-romantic exfoliations of Edgar Allan Poe. Little known texts of Poe's poetics and poetry will be explored & discussed.
3. Emily Dickinson.

IV: Mid-and-later Nineteenth Century currents.

1. Emily Bronte. Elizabeth Barrett Browning.
2. The Pre-Raphaelite Movement. Dante Gabriel Rossetti.
3. The revolutionary poetics of certain key figures of world significance: Baudelaire, Rimbaud and the incomparable, Isidore Ducasse, Comte de LAUTREAMONT, the seminal author of MALDOROR, culmination point of romanticism and its supersession into surrealism.
4. Symbolism. Swinburne.
5. Post-romantic subjectivism and the reaction against it by turn-of-the-century.

V: The Twentieth Century.

1. High poetic expression in early period: Samuel Greenberg in America (1893-1917).
2. American dada and avant-garde currents in the 1920's.
   a. Mina Loy. Harry Crosby.
3. Claude McKay.
4. The Californian super-romantic poet, Clark Ashton Smith.
5. The neo-gothic & weird romances of H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith and other American writers of the "Cthulu-mythos": Frank Bellnap Long, et. al.
6. Surrealism in England: David Gascoyne by 1934.

VI: Surrealist poetic theory.

1. Survey of the poetic surrealism in Breton's key manifesto of 1924.
2. Crucial importance of Freud's theories of sexuality, dreams and the interrelations of conscious and unconscious psychical life.
3. Psychic automatism. Discovery of automatic writing.
4. Poetic analogy. Reading & discussion of... Rising Sign by André Breton, included in the required text, WHAT IS SURREALISM?, pgs. 280-283.
5. Surrealist interpretation of Marx's materialist dialectic.
6. Poetry and Revolution.

VII: Beyond literature: poetic expression in American blues songs, movies, comic books, animated cartoons, radio dramas, etc.

1. Detailed discussion of BLUES AND THE POETIC SPIRIT by Paul Garon.
2. Cinematic correspondences: THE SHADOW AND ITS SHADOW by Paul Hammond; also his The Marvelous Méliès.
3. The surrealist movement in the United States. The actual presence of Breton, Ernst, Duchamp and other surrealists in America during World War II. Generally hostile reaction, in spite of a few exceptions, Kamrowski, Gorky in painting; subsequent history traced. Inception of first indigenously organized group in the mid-1960's; public manifestations of 1970's.
4. General condition of poetry in the U.S. since World War II.

VIII: Examination of recent poetic manifestations. Texts by Penelope and Franklin Rosemont, Joseph Jablonski and Nancy Joyce Peters.

Poetic texts translated from other languages into English: Breton, Péret, Eluard, Magloire-Saint-Aude (Haiti), Cesariny (Portugal), etc. and their inspiration for recent American poetic practice.

2. Poetry as spirit of the de-alienation of humanity and its language.
3. Constant mutability of linguistic signs.
4. Another reality surpassing given reality.
5. The poeticization of the world.

Required Text: WHAT IS SURREALISM? Selected Writings of André Breton. Ed. &introduced by Franklin Rosemont. Monad Press, 1978. Students are urged to acquire their copies conveniently at City Lights Book Store, 261 Columbus Avenue, San Francisco, where copies have been reserved for them and can be requested accordingly. Pr. $8.95.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING

Unless otherwise designated most books are presumed in print.
Key: o.p. (out of print), (p) paperback, (SFAI L) San Francisco Art Institute Library.

Arp, Hans: ARP ON ARP. Poems, essays, memories. Documents of 20th Art, Viking Press,1972. (p) (SFAI L)

Bachelard, Gaston: ON POETIC IMAGINATION AND REVERIE. Lib. of Liberal Arts. N.Y. 1971. (p)

Breton, André: MANIFESTOS OF SURREALISM. Univ. Michigan Press. (p)(SFAI L)
SURREALISM AND PAINTING. Random Hse. N.Y. 1972. (p)
SELECTED POEMS. Grossman Cape Editions. (p) (SFAI L)
YOUNG CHERRY TREES SECURED AGAINST HARES. Poems. U. of Michigan Press, 1969.
NADJA. Grove Press, 1960. (p) (SFAI L)
ODE TO CHARLES FOURIER. Cape Golliard. (p) o.p.

Carrouges, Michel: ANDRE BRETON AND THE BASIC CONCEPTS OF SURREALISM. Univ. of Alabama Press, 1974.

Césaire, Aimé: RETURN TO MY NATIVE LAND. Preface by Breton. French text with English translation. Presence Africaine, Paris. Also Penguin Books edition, but without Breton. (p)

Collins, William: POETICAL WORKS. Aldine ed., London, 1894. (SFAI L)
---and with Gray. (p)

Dickinson, Emily: COMPLETE POEMS. Little, Brown. (p).

Eluard, Paul: CAPITAL OF PAIN. Tr.: R.M. Weisman. Grossman, 1973 (p)

Freneau, Philip: POEMS OF FRENEAU. Hafner Lib. of Classics. 1960. (p)

Garon, Paul: BLUES AND THE POETIC SPIRIT. Eddison Press Ltd., London, 1975. To be published in U.S. paperback edition by De Capo Press in 1979.

Greenberg, Samuel: POEMS FROM THE GREENBERG MSS. New Directions, 1939 o.p.; also included in New Directions In Prose & Poetry 1939 (annual anthology). o.p.

POEMS BY SAMUEL GREENBERG. Ed by Harold Holden & Jack McManis. Holt & Co., N.Y. 1947. o.p.
POEMS OF SAMUEL GREENBERG. Edited and introduced by Philip Lamantia. FORTHCOMING, to be published by City Lights Books, SF, 1980.

Hegel, G.W.F.: AESTHETICS. Lectures on Fine Art. Tr. by T.M. Knox. 2 vols. Volume 2 contains section on Poetry. Oxford U. Press, 1975.

Jablonski, Joseph: IN A MOTH'S WING. poems. Black Swan Press, Chicago, 1974.

Kaufman, Bob: GOLDEN SARDINE. poems. City Lights Books. (p)
SOLITUDES CROWDED WITH LONELINESS. New Directions. (p)
ABOMUNIST MANIFESTO. City Lights Books. (p)

Lamantia, Philip: TOUCH OF THE MARVELOUS. Four Seasons Press, 1974 (p) (SFAI L) poems.

The BLOOD OF THE AIR. Four Seasons Press, 1970. (p) (SFAI L) poems.
Poetic Matters. Critique of situation of poetry in the U.S., in Arsenal, no. 3, 1976.
The Crime of Poetry. In surrealist section of City Lights Anthology, San Francisco, 1974 (p)

Lautréamont, Comte de: MALDOROR. Tr. by Paul Knight. Penguin Books, 1978. Latest and perhaps best translation extant. (p) (SFAI L)

Low, Mary & Brea, Juan: RED SPANISH NOTEBOOK. City Lights Books,1979 (p).

Loy, Mina: LUNAR BAEDECKER & TIME-TABLES. Jonathan Williams, Highands, 1958. poems. (p) o.p.

Mc Kay, Claude: SELECTED POEMS OF. With biographical note by Max Eastman. Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., N.Y. (p)

Mather, Cotton: ON WITCHCRAFT (WONDERS OF THE INVISIBLE WORLD). Bell Publishing Co., New York .

Marcuse, Herbert: EROS AND CIVILIZATION. Beacon Press, Boston, 1955, 1966. (p) (SFAI L)

Matthews, J.H.: SURREALIST POETRY IN FRANCE. Syracuse University Press, 1969.
TOWARDS THE POETICS OF SURREALISM. Syracuse U P, 1976
BENJAMIN PÉRET. Twayne Publishers, Boston, 1975.
SURREALISM AND FILM. Syracuse Univ. Press.
SURREALISM AND THE NOVEL.

Levin, Harry: THE POWER OF BLACKNESS. Hawthorne/Poe/Melville. Vintage Books, N.Y. 1958.

Paz, Octavio: THE BOW AND THE LYRE. McGraw Hill. (p)
EARLY POEMS 1935-55. New Directions. (p)
EAGLE OR SUN?. October House, N.Y. (p) surrealist prose-poetry.

Péret, Benjamin: Magic: the Flesh and Blood of Poetry. In VIEW, no. 2, series III, 1943. also KRAUS Reprint.
PERET'S SCORE. Poems. Tr. by J.H. Matthews. M.J. Minard, Paris, 1965. (p)o.p.

Poe, Edgar Allan Poe: THE PORTABLE POE. Viking Press, N.Y. Contains most of the poems and important text, Between Wakefulness and Sleep, pp. 657-660 (p) (SFAI L)

THE UNKNOWN POE. Indispensable anthology of hard-to-find writings on poetry, imagination, humor, the sublime. Essays (in translation) by Baudelaire, Mallarmé, & Breton. Ed. by Raymond Foye. FORTHCOMING. To be published by City Lights Books in 1979.

Rimbaud, Arthur: ILLUMINATIONS. Tr. by Louise Varese. New Directions (p)
SEASON IN HELL. Tr. by Varese. New Directions. (p)
COLLECTED POEMS. Penguin Books. Prose translations (p)

Rosemont, Franklin: MORNING OF A MACHINE GUN. Poems & drawings. Surrealist Editions, Black Swan Press, Chicago, 1968 (p).
The Crisis of the Imagination. In Arsenal, no 2, 1973.
The New Argonautica. In City Lights Anthology, City Lights Books, 1974.

Penrose, Valentine: POEMS & NARRATIONS. Tr. by Roy Edwards. Frontispiece by Eileen Agar. Carcanet Press & Elephant Trust, Manchester, England. Distr. by Dufor Editions, Chester Springs, PA. (p) 1977.

Shelley, Percy Bysshe: THE POETICAL WORKS. Cambridge Editions. Houghton Miflin, Boston. Contains The Necessity of Atheism, Preface to Queen Mab and [illegible] parts of Defence of Poetry.
DEFENCE OF POETRY. In Everyman anthology titled APOLOGY FOR POETRY. Dent.

Rosemont, Penelope: ATHANOR. poems. Black Swan Press, Chicago. (p)

Peters, Nancy Joyce: IT'S IN THE WIND. surrealist poems. drawings by Mado. Black Swan Press, Chicago.

Wigglesworth, Michael: THE DAY OF DOOM. With other poems. Ed. by Kenneth B. Murdock. New York: Russell & Russell. 1966. o.p.

Winslow, Pete: A DAISY IN THE MEMORY OF A SHARK. surrealist poems. City Lights Books, 1973 (p)

Young, Edward: NIGHT THOUGHTS. Many 19th cent. editions.
POETICAL WORKS. Aldine, ed. 2 vols. o.p.

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General reference: TYLER, Moses Coit: A History of American Literature 1607-1765. Forword by Perry Miller. Collier Books, N.Y. (p)

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MARVELOUS FREEDOM: Vigilance of Desire. Catalog of World Surrealist Exhibition, Chicago, 1976. Black Swan Press. (SFAI L)

VVV. Edited by David Hare. Breton, Marcel Duchamp & Max Ernst were Editorial Advisors. Number 1, 2-3 (double no.) and 4. 1942-1944. New York. (Library of SF Museum of Art)

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ARSENAL: Surrealist Subversion. Journal of surrealist movement in the United States. No. 1 (1970) o.p.; #2 (1973); #3 (1976) Ed. by F. Rosemont, Chicago.